

CIRCUIT LAYOUT STRUCTURE

DESCRIPTION

Cross Reference to Related Applications

(Para 1) This application claims the priority benefit of Taiwan application serial no. 92133284, filed on November 27, 2003.

Background of Invention

(Para 2) Field of the Invention

(Para 3) The present invention relates to a circuit layout structure. More particularly, the present invention relates to a circuit layout structure with a power circuit and a ground circuit having a sufficient line width to maintain signal integrity during transmission.

(Para 4) Description of the Related Art

(Para 5) Due to the rapid development of the electronic industry in recent years, integrated circuit (IC) chips find applications in many areas. To meet the demands of as many customers as possible, semiconductor manufacturers have to increase the level of integration of their IC chips. Hence, the density of input/output terminals in each single chip has to increase correspondingly. In other words, for a conventional wire-bonded chip, either the size of the chip has to be reduced for the same number of signal input/output terminals or the number of signal input/output terminals has to be increased for a chip of a given size. In general, the density of input/output terminals can be increased by dispensing the bonding pads around the active surface of the chip in a multi-tier (three-tier or four-tier) organization.

(Para 6) Fig. 1 is a top view of a section of a conventional circuit layout structure on a chip. Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view along line I-I' of Fig. 1. As

shown in Figs. 1 and 2, the chip 50 has a bonding pad area A1 and a nearby device area A2. The chip 50 further comprises a substrate 60 and a circuit layout structure 100. The circuit layout structure 100 essentially comprises a plurality of circuit layers (M1, M2, ..., M6), a plurality of dielectric layers 110, and a plurality of vias 120. The circuit layers M1, M2, ..., M6 sequentially stacking over the substrate 60. The dielectric layers 110 sandwiching between adjacent circuit layers M1, M2, ..., M6. The vias 120 passing through the dielectric layers 110 and electrically connect to various circuit layers (M1, M2, ..., M6).

(Para 7) The sixth circuit layer M6 (the topmost layer or the layer farthest from the substrate 60) has a plurality of bonding pads 130 ~ 133 within the bonding pad area A1. The bonding pads 130 ~ 133 are organized into a plurality of rows including a first bonding pad row R1, a second bonding pad row R2, a third bonding pad row R3, and a fourth bonding pad row R4. In the conventional circuit layer structure 100, the bonding pads 130 and 131 of the first bonding pad row R1 and the second bonding pad row R2 are signal bonding pads. The bonding pads 132 in the third bonding pad row R3 are power bonding pads and the bonding pads 133 in the fourth bonding pad row R4 are ground bonding pads. Furthermore, the bonding pads 130 and 131 in the first bonding pad row R1 and the second bonding pad row R2 respectively are electrically connected to the second and third circuit layers M2 and M3 through a set of vias 120. Similarly, the bonding pads 132 and 133 in the third bonding pad row R3 and the fourth bonding pad row R4 respectively are electrically connected to the fourth and the fifth circuit layers M4 and M5 through another set of vias 120. Consequently, the power line L1 connecting the bonding pads 132 of the third bonding pad row R3 and the ground line L2 connecting the bonding pads 133 of the fourth bonding pad row R4 alternate with the signal line L3 connecting the bonding pads 130 of the first bonding pad row R1 in area S1 and alternate with the signal line L4 connecting the bonding pads 131 of the second bonding pad row R2 in area S2.

(Para 8) Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view along line II-II' of Fig. 2. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the power lines L1 and the ground line L2 alternate with the

signal line L4 on the left side area S2. Meanwhile, the power line L1 and the ground line L2 alternate with another signal line L3 on the right side area S1. Thus, the line width of the power line L1, the ground line L2, the signal lines L3 and L4 is subjected to some limitations so that the circuit layout of the power line L1 and the ground line L2 is more complicated.

(Para 9) Because the power line and the ground line alternates with the signal line, a portion of the power line and ground line must be narrowed to make way for the passage of the signal line. Yet, the power line and the ground line must have a substantial cross-sectional area for the passage of current. Without increasing the size of a chip, the narrower section in areas where the signal lines alternate with the power line and the ground line in a conventional circuit layout structure is bound to compromise the signal transmission integrity of the chip.

Summary of Invention

(Para 10) Accordingly, at least one objective of the present invention is to provide a circuit layout structure for preventing the power line and the ground line within the bonding pad area of a chip from alternating with the signal line. Hence, complexity of the circuit layout structure is reduced and electrical performance of the chip is improved.

(Para 11) To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, as embodied and broadly described herein, the invention provides a circuit layout structure for a chip. The chip has a bonding pad area, a nearby device area and a substrate. The circuit layout structure mainly comprises a plurality of circuit layers, a plurality of dielectric layers, and a plurality of vias. The circuit layers are sequentially stacked over the substrate. The dielectric layers are sandwiched between pairs of neighboring circuit layers. The vias pass through the dielectric layer and electrically connect to various circuit layers. Furthermore, the circuit layer furthest from the substrate has a plurality of bonding pads within the bonding pad area. The bonding pads near the device area overstride at least one non-signal

circuit layer through the farthest circuit layer away from the substrate and electrically connects to a circuit layer nearer to the substrate with vias.

(Para 12) In the circuit layout structure of present invention, the bonding pads close to the device area overstride the non-signal circuit layer through the top circuit layer before electrically connecting the circuit layer close to the substrate. Hence, the alternating of the power/ground line with the signal line in the bonding pad area can be avoided. In other words, the present invention is able to increase the line width of the power line and the ground line and provide a sectional area large enough for the flow of current for the same circuit wiring area so that signals can be transmitted with integrity. In the meantime, because the power line and the ground line have a sufficient line width, the number of power bonding pads and ground bonding pads can be reduced to decrease the size of the chip.

(Para 13) It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary, and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention as claimed.

Brief Description of Drawings

(Para 14) The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding of the invention, and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

(Para 15) Fig. 1 is a top view of a section of a conventional circuit layout structure on a chip.

(Para 16) Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view along line I-I' of Fig. 1.

(Para 17) Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view along line II-II' of Fig. 2.

(Para 18) Fig. 4 is a top view of a section of a circuit layout structure on a chip according to one preferred embodiment of this invention.

(Para 19) Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view along line III-III' of Fig. 4.

(Para 20) Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view along line IV-IV' of Fig. 4.

Detailed Description

(Para 21) Reference will now be made in detail to the present preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers are used in the drawings and the description to refer to the same or like parts.

(Para 22) Fig. 4 is a top view of a section of a circuit layout structure on a chip according to one preferred embodiment of this invention. Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view along line III-III' of Fig. 4. Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view along line IV-IV' of Fig. 4. A circuit layout structure 200 on a substrate 80 is shown in Figs. 4, 5, and 6. The circuit layout structure 200 is fabricated on a chip 70. The chip 70 has a central bonding pad area B1 and an adjacent peripheral device area B2. The circuit layout structure 200 mainly comprises a plurality of circuit layers (M1, M2, ..., M6), a plurality of dielectric layers 210, and a plurality of vias 220. The circuit layers M1, M2, ..., M6 are sequentially stacked over the substrate 80. For example, the circuit layers includes a first circuit layer M1, a second circuit layer M2, a third circuit layer M3, a fourth circuit layer M4, a fifth circuit layer M5 and a sixth circuit layer M6. The first circuit layer M1 is closest to the substrate 80. The dielectric layers 210 are respectively sandwiched between pairs of neighboring circuit layers M1, M2, ..., M6. The vias 220 pass through the dielectric layers 210 and electrically connect with various circuit layers M1, M2, ..., M6.

(Para 23) The circuit layer farthest from the substrate 80 (the sixth circuit layer M6) has a plurality of bonding pads 230 ~ 233 formed within the bonding pad area B1. It should be noted that the bonding pads (for example, the bonding pads 231 in Fig. 5) close to the device area B2 are electrically connected to a circuit layer (for example, the second circuit layer M2) close to the substrate 80 via the fifth circuit layer M5, the sixth circuit layer M6 and a via 220. Similarly, the bonding pad 230 in Fig. 6 is electrically connected to a circuit layer (for example, the third circuit layer M3) close to the substrate 80 via the sixth circuit layer M6 directly. In addition, the bonding pads 230 ~ 233

can be grouped into a first bonding pad row R1, a second bonding pad row R2, a third bonding pad row R3, and a fourth bonding pad row R4. The bonding pads 230 and 231 of the first bonding pad row R1 and the second bonding pad row R2 can be signal bonding pads. Meanwhile, the bonding pads 232 and 233 of the third bonding pad row R3 and the fourth bonding pad row R4 can be non-signal bonding pads such as power bonding pads or ground bonding pads. For example, the bonding pads 233 can be ground bonding pads, and the bonding pads 232 can be the power bonding pads.

(Para 24) As shown in Figs. 4, 5 and 6, the circuit layout structure 200 further comprises a power ring 240 and a ground ring 250 (only a portion of the two is shown). The power ring 240 is constructed from the fifth circuit layer M5 within the device area B2, and the ground ring 250 is constructed from the fourth circuit layer M4 within the device area B2.

(Para 25) The line III-III' in Fig. 4 cut through the second and the fourth bonding pad row R2, R4 so that their corresponding wiring layout of the second and fourth circuit layer M2, M4 can be observed in Fig. 5. A signal line L6 connected to the bonding pad 231 of the second bonding pad row R2 enters the device area B2 and runs on the topmost circuit layer (the sixth circuit layer M6). Hence, the signal line L6 overstrides the power ring 240 and the ground ring 250 in the fourth and the fifth circuit layers M4, M5. Thereafter, the signal line L6 is electrically connected to the second circuit layer M2 through a via 220. Thus, the signal line is prevented from alternating with the power line or the ground line. Similarly, the ground line L7 connected to the bonding pad 233 of the fourth bonding pad row R4 is electrically connected to the ground ring 250 via the fourth circuit layer M4.

(Para 26) The line IV-IV' in Fig. 4 cut through the first and the third bonding pad row R1, R3 so that their corresponding wiring layout of the first and third circuit layer M3, M5 can be observed in Fig. 6. A signal line L5 connected to the bonding pad 230 of the first bonding pad row R1 enters the device area B2 and runs on the topmost circuit layer (the sixth circuit layer M6). Hence, the signal line L5 overstrides the power ring 240 and the ground ring 250 in the fourth and the fifth circuit layers M4, M5. Thereafter, the signal line L5 is

electrically connected to the third circuit layer M3 through a via 220. Thus, the signal line is prevented from alternating with the power line or the ground line. Similarly, the power line L8 connected to the bonding pad 232 of the third bonding pad row R3 is electrically connected to the power ring 240 via the fifth circuit layer M5.

(Para 27) Furthermore, the circuit layout structure 200 according to the present invention also permits the area S3 underneath the power line L8 and the ground line L7 to serve as a disposing place for an electrostatic discharge (ESD) device.

(Para 28) In summary, major advantages of the circuit layout structure according to the present invention includes:

(Para 29) 1. The bonding pads close to the device region utilizes the circuit layer farthest from the substrate to overstride at least a non-signal circuit layer before joining with a circuit layer closer to the substrate through a via. Hence, the power line and the ground line will not alternate with the signal line within the bonding pad area of the chip.

(Para 30) 2. Because the power line and the ground line never alternate with the signal line, the power line and the ground line have a sufficient line width for maintaining signal transmission integrity.

(Para 31) 3. Since the power line and the ground line have sufficient line width, the number of power bonding pads and ground bonding pads need not be increased and hence overall size of the chip can be reduced.

(Para 32) 4. A simpler circuit layout design can be used when the power line and the ground line do not alternate with the signal line. Therefore, the space underneath the bonding pads can be used for disposing an electrostatic discharge device.

(Para 33) 5. With a simpler circuit layout, time for designing the circuit layer structure and cost for fabricating the chip are reduced.

(Para 34) It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the structure of the present invention without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention. In view

of the foregoing, it is intended that the present invention cover modifications and variations of this invention provided they fall within the scope of the following claims and their equivalents.